

Appl. No.: 10/008,060
Amdt. Dated: 1/29/04
Reply to Office Action of: 12/1/03

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim 18 of the application, objected to but indicated as being directed to allowable subject matter, has now been rewritten in independent form. Accordingly that claim is now allowable. Reconsideration of this application in view of that amendment and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Examiner has finally rejected claims 13-14, 16 and 19 of the application under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,782,570 (Spridco) in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,972,669 (Brown) and a reference referred to by the Examiner as "Holpp et al." The Applicant questions whether "Holpp et al." is of record in this case. It does not appear to be listed on any of the Notices of References Cited (PTO 1449 or PTO-892) in the Applicant's file, and the Applicant has been unable to find a patent or publication number for that reference in the record.

If in fact Holpp et al. is not of record, the Examiner is requested to withdraw the finality of the present rejection, clearly identify and cite the Holpp et al. reference, and issue another action in this case so that the Applicant may review that reference and respond to the rejection.

Notwithstanding the Applicant's inability to discuss Holpp et al., the rejection of claims 13-14, 16 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is nevertheless traversed because of the clear insufficiency of Brown to disclose a critical feature of the claims. Independent claim 19 critically requires the step of:

"..... rotating first and second guides about the longitudinal axis of the catalyst substrate while a cutting filament extends between the guides;"

The criticality of this limitation resides in the fact that it is not possible to form a conical or frusto-conical end face on a stationary cylindrical honeycomb body with a straight cutting filament unless at least one of the endpoints of the filament is rotated about the axis of the cylinder. The Examiner has failed to address the clear failure of Brown to teach or suggest this requirement; instead the Examiner continues to equate the pulley rotation of Brown, or the fact that Brown pulleys can be moved to adjust wire angle or tension, to rotation of the wire length about the axis of a workpiece. Rotation of either one or both of Brown's wire pulleys about the axis of any workpiece is not even remotely suggested by Brown, yet would be necessary to anticipate or suggest the Applicant's process.

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Spridco adds nothing to the prior art of record in this case, and it is doubtful that Holpp et al. does either. The cross-cutting of continuously extruded ceramic honeycombs to a desired length is well known, as would be apparent from the disclosure of Deming, U.S. Patent No. 5,487,694, made of record by the Applicant herein. Further, while the Examiner cited Holpp et al. to show a conical end face on a honeycomb substrate for good flow distribution, that feature was already well known in the art from DE 24 28 964, also made of record by the Applicant herein. Neither reference discloses the critical wire guide rotation feature of the Applicant's claims.

For the above reasons, the Applicant's method of forming a conical honeycomb end face by the rotation of wire guides about the longitudinal axis of a honeycomb substrate is clearly not shown or suggested by any of the art relied in support of the rejection of claims 13-14, 16 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103 in this case. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully urges reconsideration and withdrawal of the final rejection of those claims.

The Examiner further rejected claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Spridco in view of Brown and U.S. Patent No. 4,208,931 to Collins. Collins was cited to show a cutting apparatus including a cutting filament disposed between two wire guides, with spools for supplying and taking up the filament. Again, however, Collins fails to teach or suggest apparatus or a method wherein the wire guides are rotated about a longitudinal axis of the bulk material being cut. Absent any disclosure of this feature, the subject matter of claim 15, which depends from claim 19, is clearly patentable over the combination of Spridco, Brown and Collins, and thus claim 15 should also be allowed.

Finally, the Examiner has separately rejected claim 17 of the application under 35 U.S.C. §103 as also unpatentable over the combination of Spridco, Brown and Holpp et al. Here the Holpp et al. reference was cited to teach conical or frusto-conical end faces on catalyst honeycombs, but that feature was already well known in the art as shown by DE 24 28 964 as discussed above.

In any case, and notwithstanding the state of the art respecting conically shaped honeycombs reflected in this case, it remains apparent that the art of record fails to teach or suggest a filament cutting process comprising rotationally translating wire guides that cut a conical end face on a cylindrical honeycomb. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 17 is clearly patentable over the cited combination of Spridco, Brown and Holpp et al. for the same reasons as offered above to support the patentability of claims 13-14, 16 and 19

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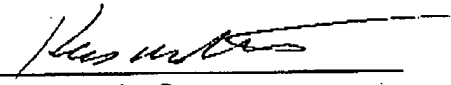
thereover, and therefore that the rejection of that claim on the cited combination of references should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

For all of the above reasons, the Applicant respectfully submits that remaining claims 13-19 of this application are patentable over the prior art of record herein and now in condition for allowance. Accordingly favorable reconsideration of this application and allowance of those remaining claims are courteously solicited.

Applicants believe that no extension of time is necessary to make this Reply timely, but contingently request that the Office grant such time extension pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) as is necessary to make this Reply timely, if in fact such an extension is required. In that contingency the Office is hereby authorized to charge any necessary extension fee or surcharge to the deposit account of Corning Incorporated, Deposit Account 03-3325.

Respectfully submitted,

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